

3. (Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the [alginate] hydrocolloid is Na-alginate.

4. (Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid is [LMP] low-methoxy pectin (LMP).

5. (Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid is [selected among] K-carrageenan or λ -carrageenan.

6. (Amended) A method as defined [in any of Claims 1 to 5, characterised in that] Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid solution is in [CAMMR] Calcium Adjusted Modified Marc's Ringer (CAMMR) solution.

7. (Amended) A method as defined [in any of Claims 1 to 6] in Claim 1, wherein the cell is a [Xenopus laevis] Xenopus laevis egg and embryos.

8. (Amended) A method as defined in [any of Claims 1 to 7] Claim 1, wherein the cross-linking solution is a solution of Ca, Ba or K ions.

11. A method as defined in [any of Claims 1 to 10] Claim 1, wherein said thin layer coating of hydrocolloid is up to about 50 μm in thickness.

12. (Amended) A method of postponing hatching of [Xenopus laevis] Xenopus laevis embryos comprising the steps of
applying a thin coating of [an] a hydrocolloid to a [Xenopus laevis] Xenopus laevis egg;
and
cross-linking said hydrocolloid.

13. (Amended) A method as defined in [any of Claims 1 to 3 and 6 to 12] Claim 1,
wherein the alginate has a high [M] mannuronic acid (M) content.

14. (Amended) A method as defined in Claim 13 wherein the [M] mannuronic acid (M) content of the alginate is from about 29 to about 61 %.

15. (Amended) A cell having a thin coating of a hydrocolloid [according to any of the Claims 1 to 14].

Please add the following new claims.

16. (New) A method as defined in Claim 12, wherein the hydrocolloid is an alginate.

17. (New) A method as defined in Claim 12 wherein the alginate has a high mannuronic acid (M) content.